

Your Breastfed Infant in the Child Care Setting

By planning ahead you can choose a care provider who will meet your needs.

Returning to work and continuing to breastfeed can provide a closeness and bond to your child while you are at work. Your baby will benefit if he or she can build a close relationship with people in his or her life. Your child care provider is one of the first people outside your family that is included in this close, trusting relationship.

Choosing a child care provider

Allow plenty of time to interview potential providers. Consider starting the process while you are pregnant or as soon as you know you will be returning to work. Many care providers have waiting lists.

Consider the following when choosing a child care provider:

- Knowledgeable about breastfeeding or willing to learn.
- Licensed to provide infant and child care.
- Provides a safe and clean place for your baby.
- The maximum ratio of infants to staff is four to one.
- The infant room has a rocking chair, cribs or other appropriate infant equipment and supplies.
- Encourages your visits to the child care location to breastfeed and play with your baby. Has an area where you are comfortable breastfeeding.
- Has trained staff who have experience with infant care and who are nurturing and attentive to children and their care.
- Shares your belief that you can continue to breastfeed after you return to work.
- Has a refrigerator and a freezer for properly storing breastmilk and warm water for warming or defrosting breastmilk.
- Is a short distance from work if you are able to leave work to nurse your baby.

Introducing a bottle

Introducing a bottle is easy for some babies but requires more time for others. Practice time with a bottle can begin anytime after breastfeeding has been successfully established, usually after breastfeeding for four to six weeks. If it is necessary to return to work before this time, you may need to begin introducing a bottle while you are still establishing your milk supply.

It is best to introduce a bottle at a time of day when your baby would normally be in child care. This introduces your baby to the bottle and allows you an opportunity to learn how to express your milk.

Your baby may not like taking a bottle from you as he or she is used to breastfeeding. If this happens, ask a family member, friend or neighbor to help introduce the bottle. At least one bottle per day with a few ounces of expressed breastmilk should get your baby familiar with the bottle and shouldn't interfere with breastfeeding. Your baby may like a nipple,

which imitates the size and shape of a breast. You may need to try different nipples on the bottle.

If your baby is still having trouble after several tries and you are becoming frustrated, try a cup, or spoon. If your baby has a difficult time accepting a bottle, be patient; continue to offer the bottle and allow the baby to explore it at her own pace. Some babies will refuse a bottle after taking one easily for several months.

Practice child care visit(s)

Practice visits are a way of transitioning your baby. The visits help your baby become used to the child care provider. It allows you time to coordinate your efforts in getting yourself and your baby ready in a way similar to the one you will be using when you return to work. The practice visits could be once a week for four weeks, or for one feeding per day for the week before you return to work. Arrange practice visits between your child care provider and your baby before returning to work. Keep track of your baby's normal feeding times and write them down for your child care provider.

Other comforts

When your baby is away from you, it may be helpful to provide comforts to help him or her feel safe and secure. If your baby has a comfort object, such as a stuffed animal or special blanket,

take it to the child care setting. It may also be helpful to identify some other comforts at home and to duplicate these in the child care setting.

Some of these might be a:

- Piece of clothing with your scent—babies have a good sense of smell.
- Tape recording of your voice singing lullabies or reading.
- Windup musical toy or mobile.
- Let the child care provider know how you hold your baby during feedings. This may help your baby relax.

Meeting your baby's nutritional needs

It is possible to meet your baby's nutritional needs while at work. Mothers have found success choosing one of the following options:

1. Express and refrigerate your breastmilk at work for the next day's feedings at child care. Continue to breastfeed whenever you or your baby are together, or
2. Go to the child care provider during your lunch break for feedings or have your care provider bring your baby to your worksite, or
3. Nurse at home in the morning, evening, at nights and on the weekends. Have your care giver feed your

baby iron-fortified infant formula while you are at work. You may need to provide some formula on the weekend as your milk production may be low.

If you are planning to provide breastmilk for your baby while he or she is away from you, consider using a manual or electric breastpump, or expressing your milk by hand. Any of these methods or a combination of methods may work best for you. For more information, refer to the support organizations listed in this packet.

Your milk supply can be maintained by following these suggestions

- Waiting until your milk supply is well established, usually by four to six weeks, before introducing a bottle.
- Nursing your baby whenever he shows signs of hunger such as rooting, mouthing and sucking on fingers or hands. Limit pacifier use.
- Nursing at least 8 -12 times every day.
- Express your breastmilk when your breasts feel full. This could be first thing in the morning while nursing your baby. (There is usually an increase in breastmilk at this time). You may want to consider a one handed pump for this reason.



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